

## Looking Back at 20 Years of Y-3

The collaborative label has redefined contemporary fashion and footwear for two decades with minimal branding, elevated silhouettes, and more.



Y-3

Footwear

Feb 25, 2022

 12,892 Hypes

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TEXT BY

Elliot Santiago

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In the last two decades, [adidas](#) (XETRA:ADS.DE +0.24%) has teamed up with high-profile industry names and brands including [Kanye West](#), [Pharrell](#), [South Park](#), [Prada](#) and more, but few of these have the history and heritage that its collaborative Y-3 sub-label possesses. Japanese designer [Yohji Yamamoto](#) has been helming this imprint since 2002, and he's been pushing the boundaries in contemporary fashion and footwear ever since. Y-3 was one of the first to

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Y-3

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*South Park*, Prada and more, but few of these have the history and heritage that its collaborative Y-3 sub-label possesses. Japanese designer Yohji Yamamoto has been helming this imprint since 2002, and he's been pushing the boundaries in contemporary fashion and footwear ever since. Y-3 was one of the first to blend the worlds of high-fashion with sportswear — something we know all too well today — and it continues to dominate in this space.

Some of the most innovative product designs have spawned from this partnership. A footwear silhouette as iconic as the Y-3 Qasa will forever be remembered for its unique design and how it influenced a whole generation of contemporary and lifestyle sneaker models. And athletic apparel such as hoodies, tracksuits, jumpsuits and tech wear now have room in streetwear as Yamamoto reinterpreted this category through minimal branding, tasteful patterns and neutral tones.

The hype over the label has more or less simmered down in recent years, but the brand is still making strides to remain relevant with a slew of lifestyle footwear offerings and athleisure capsules. It's safe to say that Yamamoto's brand still has plenty left in the tank, and as it gears up for its 20th anniversary HYPEBEAST has taken a look back into some of its most pivotal moments.

## Debut, 2003



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Xavier Rossi/Getty Images

Having already run his own label for 30 years, Yohji Yamamoto was thirsty for a new venture, one that he would be able to amalgamate all of his knowledge from working in the luxury space with street and sportswear. After getting rejected by Nike, he ran with this collaborative idea and pitched it to adidas in 2002. The German sportswear brand was much more open to the idea of doing something that had never been done before in the fashion space, and the partnership was forged.

## Y-3 Platform Sandal, 2004



Aro Archive

Clogs, mules, sandals and everything in between are the new norm in today's footwear space. However, Y-3 was one of the first labels to engineer an unorthodox model slip-on model that was both contemporary and sporty, and that was the adidas Y-3 Platform Sandal. Up top, the kicks feature a high-cut mesh bootie that bears a Tabi toe-esque design, exposed heels and Three Stripes branding on the rear end. A thick platform serves as the foundation of the model, and

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Dave M. Benett/Getty Images (London Store Pictured)

## First Flagship Store Opening, 2008

Once the partnership had reached its five-year mark, Yamamoto recognized that the collaboration had gained a substantial enough fan base that it was time to go the brick-and-mortar route. In 2008, Y-3 opened its doors to the label's inaugural standalone retail space in New York City's West Village neighborhood.

## Y-3 Qasa, 2013





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Y-3

Of all of the adidas Y-3 silhouettes under the sun, the [Qasa](#) is undoubtedly the most iconic. At the time, Yamamoto felt a need to shake the sneaker landscape up with a silhouette that pushed contemporary footwear design forward, and he certainly achieved that with this offering. The model debuted in 2013 and instantly garnered mass appeal for its futuristic shape and premium comfort. Yamamoto harked back into Three Stripes' early 90s archives to bring back the brand's Tubular technology, and he merged this with own Japanese design sensibilities to create the offering. The response to this shoe was so well-received it even spawned the avant-garde designer to create more variations of the model in the years that followed.

## Y-3 PureBOOST, 2014



Flight Club

Prior to Kanye West creating a cult following for adidas

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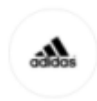
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Flight Club

Prior to Kanye West creating a cult following for adidas running sneakers such as the [UltraBOOST](#) as well as his ever-expanding line of [adidas YEEZYs](#), Yohji Yamamoto helped to introduce the cushioning system to the fashion crowd with the [Y-3 PureBOOST](#). The silhouette debuted in a handful of grayscale renditions and instantly became a hit after [Fear of God](#) founder and now one of adidas' newest collaborators [Jerry Lorenzo](#) was often seen wearing the black and white and all-white colorways.

## Y-3 Run Boost, 2016



Sns

During this time period, nearly every adidas BOOST model would capture the attention of the sneaker community, and Yohji Yamamoto couldn't help but chime in on the action so he fashioned the adidas Y-3 Run Boost. This silhouette is essentially an elevated version of the [adidas Pure Boost](#) that debuted in 2014 that bears the Japanese designer's full moniker across the middle stripe and oversized Y-3 branding on the heels. If Kanye West stepped out in public and he wasn't rocking his YEEZYs, you'd often catch him lacing up various colorways of this model, and this of course lacked up the resale prices and created more

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## Y-3 Creates Flight Suits for Virgin Galactic, 2016



Y-3

After already proving himself time and time again on the runways, Yamamoto was presented with a unique opportunity to work with Virgin Galactic — an American spaceflight company founded by [Richard Branson](#). The company admired the designer's unique perspective in fashion and tapped him to create special flight suits for the world's first commercial space flights. The suits were devised with Nomex Meta Aramid — a woven, heat-resistant synthetic material — and were designed to support a pilot's natural seating position. Y-3-made limited-edition jackets were also made for the pilots, crew and passengers.

## Y-3 4D Runner, 2018



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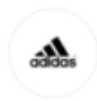
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## Y-3 4D Runner, 2018



Y-3

As adidas continued to expand upon his footwear cushioning technology with the introduction of of **FUTURECRAFT 4D**, it was only fitting that a silhouette be engineered under the Y-3 label. To kick things off on this front, Yamamoto implemented the brand's unique and latticed sole unit and designed the **Y-3 4D Runner**. The silhouette first walked the runway during **Paris Fashion Week** that year and only a mere 200 pairs were released.

## Y-3 "20 Years: Re-Coded" Campaign, 2022



Y-3

Y-3 launches its newest "20 Years: Re-Coded" campaign that features football icon and

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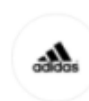
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Y-3

Y-3 launches its newest “20 Years: Re-Coded” campaign that features football icon and longtime friend of the brand [Zinedine Zidane](#). It’s designed to celebrate the brand’s two decades-long history while shining a light on Zidane and his impeccable ball control. Campaign imagery shows Zidane adorned head-to-toe in Y-3 and is seen sporting the brand’s sweatsuits, a trench coat, a puffy vest and the recently-dropped [Y-3 UltraBOOST 22](#).

No matter where the brand goes from here, it will always be remembered for being a pioneer in fusing the worlds of luxury with street. As long as it continues to hone in on its craft and continue to push out wearable, functional and elevated products, it has great potential to stay relevant, but the brand still has room to grow. Having another pivotal moment like introducing another footwear model that transcends sneaker culture like its Qasa did can definitely bring fresh energy and attract new fans to the brand, but we’ll see how it moves in the coming years.



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Y-3  
Classic Tote Bag  
US\$200



Y-3  
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drlab · 6 months ago

Always has good pieces year in year out. Doesn't pretend to be something it's not. Yohji one of the GOATS

15 ^ | v · Reply · Share



Syndicate The Hypebeast Critic · 6 months ago

I would honestly say y3 is the most wearable long term sophisticated streetwear hybrid brand of all time. It's tech, ninja, goth, streetwear, minimalist, timeless, functional, sporty, luxurious. Everything a streetwear brand should be. I legit think out of every brand on this website if I was forced to wear only one brand for the rest of my life for all occasions y3 could probably supply my wardrobe needs even until i was like 80 years old, they have that much versatility and their designs are that well thought out. I obviously wear other brands too but y3 has to be one of the greatest streetwear foundation brands a hypebeast can get into early on. Some of it is kinda expensive too but what isn't.

11 ^ | v · Reply · Share



justinbieber\_sixtynine · 6 months ago

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11 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**justinbieber\_sixtynine** · 6 months ago

Still one of my favourite brands. Many pieces I have that 10 years are older, i can still wear now.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**hyfeast** · 6 months ago · edited

Nike messed up. when Y-3 came out, i remember them saying they don't do fashion. and while there hasn't been a runway show (i think), they've had collabs for days with tons of capsule collections. would've loved to see a Yohji and Nike collab. YamaNike? NikeY? lol

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**StraightForward** · 6 months ago

Never bought one pair of Y3's. Price always seemed outrageous

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Vinyl Scratch** → StraightForward · 6 months ago

The shoes always go on sale. Feels like one of the "cheat codes" of being into footwear to find a pair of Y-3's you like and get them for half price a couple months later.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**StraightForward** → Vinyl Scratch · 6 months ago

I'm listening!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Vinyl Scratch** → StraightForward · 6 months ago

Not sure if serious but this might help someone regardless.

Check out some boutique store's website—places like END, Bodega, Ssense, Mr. Porter. Hell even Saks and Neiman can sometimes work.

Find something you like, usually around the time a new collection drops. Keep the tab open (or run a page monitor) for a while and either check on it periodically or come back near a well-known sales holiday (e.g. Memorial Day).

Focus on things you can see yourself wearing, but silos like the Shiku Run, Kaiwa, & Ajatu Court come to mind as recent good picks.

Personally I've been wearing the Y-3 UB 21 as my go-to everyday shoe; picked them up for \$140.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Meow** · 6 months ago

I'm glad the Shiku run got slept on. Can get that shit on sale or msrp.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Lbsammills51** · 6 months ago

Black/white pairs can kinda bore me, but Yohji usually cranks out a pair sooner or later that catches my eye.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Churlish Insubordinate** · 6 months ago

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**Lbsammills51** · 6 months ago

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^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Churlish Insubordinate** · 6 months ago

Dude messed up with the Qasas because everything that was released after just pales in comparison.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**waztonz** → Churlish Insubordinate · 6 months ago

naw there are some major slept on pairs

9 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Meow** → waztonz · 6 months ago

100. Some cats just can't make up their own minds and are only influenced by outside factors.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**hyfeast** → waztonz · 6 months ago

Yup. there are always new pairs coming out that surprise and interest me. ppl would be surprised at how many different models have come out since their debut. their production is versatile

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

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Fashion

### Zinedine Zidane Fronts Y-3's 20th-Anniversary Campaign

Through a series of stills and short film shot by filmmaker Gabriel Moses.

By Aaron Chow / Mar 4, 2022

🔥 8,173 Hypes 💬 6 Comments





Through a series of stills and short film shot by filmmaker Gabriel Moses.

By Aaron Chow / Mar 4, 2022

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Footwear

## adidas and Yohji Yamamoto Bring Back the Y-3 Qasa High

Honoring the Three Stripes' and Yamamoto's ongoing 20-year collaboration.

By Felson Sajonas / May 19, 2022

🔥 22,817 Hypes 💬 20 Comments



Footwear

## Y-3 Goes Back to Form With Its Runner adidas 4D Halo "Core Black/White/Red"

Yours for \$528 USD.

By Eric Brain / Mar 9, 2022

🔥 4,645 Hypes 💬 4 Comments



Footwear

## Y-3's Runner adidas 4D Halo Blends New Tech With Old Styling Cues

Coming for the 20th birthday of Y-3.

By Eric Brain / Mar 1, 2022

🔥 9,075 Hypes 💬 5 Comments



Entertainment

## Robert Pattinson and Zoë Kravitz on Character Complexity in 'The Batman'

"There's an element of narcissism [in



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## Robert Pattinson and Zoë Kravitz on Character Complexity in 'The Batman'

"There's an element of narcissism [in Batman], which was really interesting to work out," Pattinson told HYPEBEAST.

By Dylan Kelly / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 3,624 Hypes 💬 2 Comments



Fashion

## Holzweiler's SS22 "In-Transit" Collection Was Inspired by Travel and Movement

Featuring graphic prints and technical fabrics.

By Avon Dorsey / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 2,522 Hypes 💬 1 Comments



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## AC Milan, PUMA and KOCHÉ Unite for Upcycled Capsule Collection

Made from unused soccer jerseys.

By Brycen Saunders / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 2,207 Hypes 💬 1 Comments



Art

## Basquiat's 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Derelict' To Lead Christie's New York Evening Sale

Along with a 1982 sculpture that once belonged to Keith Haring.

By Dylan Kelly / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 14,426 Hypes 💬 0 Comments



## Lead Christie's New York Evening Sale

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By Dylan Kelly / Feb 25, 2022

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Art

## "Imagine Picasso" Makes U.S. Debut in San Francisco

The latest immersive art exhibition.

By Shawn Ghassemitari / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 16,797 Hypes 💬 0 Comments



Music

## Tyga and Doja Cat Reunite on "Freaky Deaky"

With a futuristic music video.

By Dylan Kelly / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 4,285 Hypes 💬 0 Comments



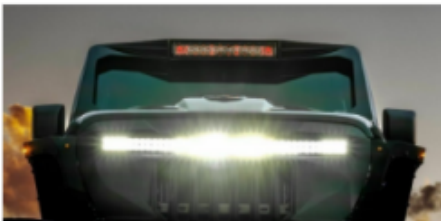
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## Norse Projects Overcomes the Elements With Latest GORE-TEX Range

Featuring classic outdoor styles in goldenrod, pine green and black.

By Brycen Saunders / Feb 25, 2022

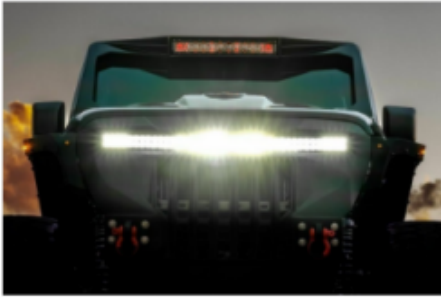
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## New "Hemi Hellcat" 6x6 Monster Truck Reaches \$220K USD Bid on eBay

Dubbed the Gladiator Oculus Tron.



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## New "Hemi Hellcat" 6x6 Monster Truck Reaches \$220K USD Bid on eBay

Dubbed the Gladiator Oculus Tron.

By Avon Dorsey / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 16,584 Hypes 💬 4 Comments



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## Pass~Port and Nike Set Release Date for Its "Workboot" SB Dunk Sneaker Collab

Releasing on March 5.

By Avon Dorsey / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 10,790 Hypes 💬 2 Comments



NFT

## Sotheby's "Punk It!" Sale Withdrawn at the Last Minute

The auction was initially estimated to bring in roughly \$20-30m USD.

By Shawn Ghassemitari / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 5,463 Hypes 💬 6 Comments



Watches

## Reservoir Joins Blake & Mortimer On An Adventure With 'By Jove'

The heroic duo originally appeared in Hergé's Tintin.

By James Buttery / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 3,232 Hypes 💬 2 Comments





The heroic duo originally appeared in Hergé's Tintin.

By James Buttery / Feb 25, 2022

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Fashion

## An adidas Collaboration Dominated Gucci's Fall 2022 Season

The luxury brand's ready-to-wear collection deploys colorful silhouettes with mixed textures and patterns.

By Shaun Harris / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 43,139 Hypes 💬 25 Comments



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## Watch Polo G's 'Fast & Furious' Inspired "Don't Play" Visual

Appearing alongside guest star Lil Baby.

By Sarah Kearns / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 673 Hypes 💬 0 Comments



Fashion

## Billionaire Boys Club Unveils First Drop From SS22 Collection

Inspired by the abstract expressionist movement and the Japanese Bonsai tradition.

By Brycen Saunders / Feb 25, 2022

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Music

## Kodak Black Drops New Album 'Back For Everything'

With a guest appearance from Lil Durk.



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By Brycen Saunders / Feb 25, 2022

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## Kodak Black Drops New Album 'Back For Everything'

With a guest appearance from Lil Durk.

By Sarah Kearns / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 3,471 Hypes 💬 0 Comments



Footwear

## How Clarks Originals Became Hip-Hop's Footwear of Choice

A look into the Somerset-based label's influence on the New York rap scene.

By Tayler Willson / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 54,411 Hypes 💬 12 Comments



Fashion

## 66°North SS22 Is Designed To Be Worn All Year Round

Engineered to cope in all conditions.

By Tayler Willson / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 5,889 Hypes 💬 0 Comments



Automotive

## Open Road: McLaren 720S Spider



🔥 5,889 Hypes 💬 0 Comments



Automotive

## Open Road: McLaren 720S Spider

Drop the roof for an addictive blood-pumping thrill ride.

By Eric Brain / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 3,442 Hypes 💬 1 Comments



Fashion

## Rhythmic Tones Introduces DeMarcoLab for SS22

Showcasing the label's technical details.

By Jack Stanley / Feb 25, 2022

🔥 8,020 Hypes 💬 2 Comments



NFT

## Sneakmart Enters the Metaverse With Sneaker-Inspired 'Metakicks'

Releasing limited-edition NFT mystery boxes.

Presented by Sneakmart / Feb 25, 2022

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